

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 1, 4-11, 13, and 19-40; and

Please ADD claim 41.

1. (Currently Amended) A communications system, comprising:

a first communications node ~~(GGSN)~~;

a second communications node ~~(SGSN)~~;

a plurality of charging nodes ~~(CGF)~~; and

a first memory;

said first node ~~comprising means for sending~~ configured to send charging information to at least one of said charging nodes,

said second node ~~comprises means for sending~~ configured to send charging information to at least one of said charging nodes,

said first memory ~~comprising means for storing~~ configured to store information identifying one of said charging nodes as being a default charging node for a communication session; wherein

said first node and said second node are ~~arranged~~ configured to send respective charging information for said session to said default charging node using said information stored in said first memory, ~~if~~ when said default charging node is available.

2-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A-The communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said communications system is a ~~UMTS~~-universal mobile telecommunications system architecture communications system.

5. (Currently Amended) A-The communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said communications system is a ~~GPRS~~-general packet radio service architecture communications system.

6. (Currently Amended) A-The communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first communications node is a gateway ~~GPRS service~~-general packet radio service support node (~~GGSN~~).

7. (Currently Amended) A-The communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second communications node is a serving ~~GPRS~~-general packet radio service support node (~~SGSN~~).

8. (Currently Amended) A-The communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one charging node comprises a charging gateway function (~~CGF~~).

9. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one charging node is a charging gateway~~(CG)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The communications system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first memory is located within said first or said second communications node.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The communications system as claimed in claim 10, further comprising:

a second memory located within the other of said first or second communications node,

wherein said second memory is ~~arranged~~configured to store information identifying at least one of said charging nodes and said ~~second~~first memory is ~~arranged~~configured so that the value stored in said memory is synchronised with the value stored in said second memory.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method~~, for billing in a communications system~~ comprising the steps of:

storing, in a first memory, information identifying one of a plurality of charging nodes associated with a communication session of a communications system as a default charging node for said session; and

sending charging information for said session from a first communications node (~~GGSN~~) to said default charging node if ~~when~~ available; and

billing in the communications system based on said charging information.

14-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A gateway communication node ~~for use in a communication system, said node comprising:~~

a memory ~~for storing~~ configured to store information identifying a default charging node (~~CG1~~) associated with a communication session (~~GPRS~~) to which said node is to send ~~said~~ charging information for said session,

wherein and said node being arranged is configured to send charging information for said session to said default charging node if ~~when~~ said default charging node is available.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The node as claimed in claim 19, wherein said node is ~~arranged~~ configured to send said information identifying said default charging node in said memory to a second node.

21. (Currently Amended) A-The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

sending charging information from a second communications node to said default node.

22. (Currently Amended) A-The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:

~~the step of~~ storing in a second memory said information identifying said default charging node.

23. (Currently Amended) A-The method as claimed in claim 22, further comprising:

~~the step of~~ maintaining said first memory and said second memory so that the information identifying the default charging node is the same.

24. (Currently Amended) A-The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:

~~the step of~~ sending said information identifying said default charging node in said first memory to a second node.

25. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:
generating charging information for a packet data connection; (~~PDP~~) and
selecting said default charging node in dependence on the communication session
with which the packet data connection (~~PDP~~) is associated.

26. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:
storing information identifying said default charging node in said first memory in
response to creating a first packet data connection (~~PDP~~) for said communication session.

27. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:
~~the step of~~ sending charging information to a secondary charging node (~~CG2~~) if
when said default charging node (~~CG1~~) is not reachable.

28. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said
storing ~~step~~ comprises selecting a charging node being currently determined as an active
charging node and storing in said first memory said active charging node as said default
charging node to be associated with the communication session.

29. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method as claimed in claim 13, ~~wherein~~
further comprising:

configuring said session (GPRS) to comprises a plurality of packet data
connections~~(PDP)~~.

30. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said
sending said charging information comprises sending a charging data record.

31. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The node as claimed in claim 19, wherein said
node is a ~~GGSN~~gateway general packet radio service support node.

32. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The node as claimed in claim 19, said node being
~~arranged~~configured to generate charging information for a packet data connection~~(PDP)~~,
and to select said default charging node in dependence on the communication session
~~(GPRS)~~-with which said packet data connection ~~(PDP)~~-is associated~~;~~.

33. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The node as claimed in claim 19, wherein said
memory is configured to store said information identifying said default charging node is
~~stored in said memory (CG1)~~-in response to a creating-creation of a first packet data
connection ~~(PDP)~~-for said communication session.

34. (Currently Amended) A The node as claimed in claim 19, wherein the node is configured to send ~~comprising means for sending~~ generated charging information of said session to said default charging node ~~(CG1)~~.

35. (Currently Amended) A The node as claimed in claim 19, ~~comprising sending means for sending~~ wherein the node is configured to send generated charging information to a secondary charging node ~~(CG2)~~ if when said default charging node ~~(CG1)~~ is not reachable.

36. (Currently Amended) A The node as claimed in claim 35, wherein said secondary charging node ~~(CG2)~~ is a currently active charging node for said node ~~(GGSN)~~.

37. (Currently Amended) A The node as claimed in claim 19, ~~comprising means for selecting~~ wherein the node is configured to select a charging node being currently determined as an active charging node for said node ~~(GGSN)~~ and ~~storing to~~ store in said memory said active charging node as said default charging node to be associated with said communication session.

38. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The node as claimed in claim 19, ~~comprising means for instructing wherein the node is configured to instruct a second node (SGSN)~~ said assigned default charging node (~~CG1~~) for said session.

39. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The node as claimed in claim 19, wherein said session (~~GPRS~~) comprises a plurality of packet data connections (~~PDP~~).

40. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The node as claimed in claim 19, wherein said charging information comprises a charging data record.

41. (New) A node, comprising:
means for storing information identifying one of a plurality of charging nodes associated with a communication session of a communications system as a default charging node for said session; and
means for sending charging information for said session from a first communications node to said default charging node when available; and
means for billing in the communications system based on said sending the charging information.